United Nations CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1

Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

Distr.: Limited
6 June 2018

Original: English

Implementation Review Group
Ninth session
Vienna, 4–6 June 2018

Draft report

I. Introduction

1. The Implementation Review Group was established by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in its resolution 3/1, entitled "Review mechanism", as an open-ended intergovernmental group of States parties to operate under its authority and report to it. The Group is to have an overview of the review process in order to identify challenges and good practices and to consider technical assistance requirements in order to ensure effective implementation of the Convention.

II. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

2. The Implementation Review Group of the United Nations Convention against Corruption held its ninth session in Vienna from 4 to 6 June 2018, which included two meetings held jointly with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery on 6 June.

3. The first to the sixth meetings of the Implementation Review Group were chaired by Vivian N. R. Okeke (Nigeria).

4. In the opening statement, the Secretary of the Conference welcomed Samoa and Equatorial Guinea, which had acceded to the Convention since the resumed eighth session of the Group. He noted that, with 163 executive summaries now finalized, the Group was in the position to continue its deliberations on the outcomes of reviews conducted during the first cycle, drawing on the vast majority of the country reviews, and to discuss information on the reviews conducted during the second cycle. In line with the multi-year work plan for the period 2017–2019, adopted by the Group, the focus of the work of the Group during its ninth session was on the analysis of information on successes, good practices, challenges, observations and technical assistance needs emanating from Chapter V on asset recovery of the Convention. In that connection, several panels had been organized during a joint session with the Working Group on Asset Recovery. Other key issues for the consideration of the Group at its ninth session included the set of non-binding recommendations and conclusions based on lessons learned regarding the implementation of Chapters III (Criminalization and law enforcement) and IV (International cooperation) of the Convention, the good practices, experiences and relevant measures taken after

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the completion of country reviews, as well as synergies with the secretariats of other relevant multilateral mechanisms in particular with regard to implementation of Conference resolution 7/4. The Secretary also noted that the matter of taking measures as may be necessary to permit other States parties to initiate civil action in court to establish title to or ownership acquired through the commission of an offence established in accordance with the Convention had been identified as a topic for more in-depth discussions at the session. Furthermore, the Secretary drew the attention of the Group to the preliminary outcome of the drawing of lots held on 1 June 2018.

5. In his statement on behalf of the Group of African States, the representative of Egypt noted that corruption, illicit financial flows and cross-border financial crimes were impediments to development, economic growth and the achievement of socio-economic wellbeing, particularly in developing countries. The representative emphasized that the fight against corruption was a common and shared responsibility and reiterated the need for the provision of relevant and adequate technical assistance to States, upon request, based on the specific needs of requesting States. Furthermore, the Group welcomed the decision of the African Union to declare 11 July as the African Anti-Corruption Day to mark the adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. Moreover, the Assembly of the African Union had declared 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year. The representative noted that this provided a good starting point for taking stock of the progress made to date and for assessing what remained to be done and for devising new strategies to address new corruption challenges. The representative recalled that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 focused on substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all its forms and manifestations. The representative also reaffirmed Conference resolution 3/1 and welcomed the ongoing second review cycle, covering Chapters II (Preventive measures) and V (Asset recovery) of the Convention. The representative noted with concern the lack of financial resources to assist States parties, in particular developing countries, to undertake country reviews in the second cycle and called upon donors to make available unearmarked extrabudgetary resources in order to provide the required technical assistance and capacity-building to States parties upon request. The representative underscored the need to preserve the intergovernmental nature of all the subsidiary bodies established by the Conference and, in this regard, welcomed the compromise reached through Conference resolution 4/6.

6. The representative of the European Union made a statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States, in which he noted that corruption posed a threat to democracy, good governance and fair competition, as well as undermined the rule of law and fundamental values. In this regard, he referred to SDG 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The representative welcomed the outcome of the new Global Forum on Asset Recovery, held in December 2017, as well as the Initiative to Raise Global Awareness of Foreign Bribery of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The representative reaffirmed the commitment of the European Union to the Implementation Review Mechanism and noted that the European Union sought ways to be reviewed. The representative commended the work undertaken during the second review cycle and its focus on preventive measures and asset recovery. Furthermore, the speaker underlined the need to maintain the transparency, inclusiveness and cost-efficiency of the Mechanism, while avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens and the duplication of work. He emphasized the need to further strengthen cooperation and coordination among the secretariats of anti-corruption mechanisms in order to enhance their performance and to meaningfully contribute to the global fight against corruption and the achievement of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The efforts undertaken by UNODC to elaborate new measures and technologies to assess risks and levels of corruption were welcomed. The speaker referred to the measures taken by the European Union in countering money-laundering, including in the areas of beneficial ownership and due diligence, improving cooperation between law enforcement authorities and FIUs and among FIUs, and in strengthening whistle-blower protection. The speaker noted that States parties should make optimal use of all available information and expertise,

including from civil society and called for the effective involvement of civil society in the second review cycle.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

7. On 4 June, the Implementation Review Group adopted the following agenda:

1. Organizational matters:
   (a) Opening of the session;
   (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
3. Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
4. Technical assistance.
5. Financial and budgetary matters.
6. Other matters.
7. Provisional agenda for the tenth session of the Implementation Review Group.
8. Adoption of the report of the Implementation Review Group on its ninth session.

C. Attendance

8. The following States parties to the Convention were represented at the meeting of the Implementation Review Group: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Niue, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

9. In accordance with Rule 1 of resolution 4/5 entitled "Participation of signatories, non-signatories, entities and intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Implementation Review Group", the Conference decided that States signatories shall be entitled to participate in the Implementation Review Group.

10. In accordance with Rule 2 of resolution 4/5, the Conference decided that intergovernmental organizations, Secretariat units, United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system may be invited to participate in the sessions of the Implementation Review Group.

11. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Regional Anti-Corruption Academy (RAI).

12. The following Secretariat units, United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system were represented by observers: World Bank, World Food Programme.

13. The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, an entity maintaining a permanent observer office at Headquarters, was represented.

United Nations CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.1

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III. Review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

A. Drawing of lots

1. In its resolution 6/1 the Conference requested the Group to, inter alia, hold intersessional meetings open to all States parties, for the purpose of the drawing of lots in accordance with paragraph 19 of the terms of reference of the Mechanism and without prejudice to the right of a State party to request that the drawing of lots be repeated at the Group's subsequent intersessional meeting or regular session.

2. In accordance with Conference resolution 6/1, an intersessional meeting of the Group open to all States parties was held on Friday, 1 June 2018.

3. With regard to the first cycle of the Mechanism, lots were drawn to select reviewing States parties for Samoa, which had acceded to the Convention since the resumed eighth session of the Implementation Review Group. Myanmar and Belize were drawn as reviewing States parties for Samoa.

4. With regard to the second cycle of the Mechanism, lots were drawn for the selection of the reviewing States parties for the third year of the second cycle. The selection of the reviewing States parties was carried out pursuant to paragraphs 19 and 20 of the terms of reference of the Mechanism. For each State party selected to be reviewed, one of the two reviewing States was selected from the same regional group and the second reviewing State was selected from a pool of all States parties (see annex II).

5. Some States requested redraws in line with the terms of reference of the Mechanism for the first and second review cycles. Those redraws were carried out during the ninth session of the Group.

V.18-03865 (E)

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Original: English

Implementation Review Group
Ninth session
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Draft report

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B. Outcome of the first cycle reviews

1. A representative of the secretariat provided an oral update on the ongoing work to develop a *Set of non-binding recommendations and conclusions based on lessons learned regarding the implementation of chapters III and IV of the Convention* (CAC/COSP/2017/5) during the first review cycle. The relevant paper had been prepared for the previous session of the Group and was submitted to the Conference on the basis of Conference resolution 6/1, in which the Group was requested to analyse the outcomes of the first cycle country reviews in terms of identified successes, good practices, challenges, observations and technical assistance needs, considering the thematic implementation reports. The paper is based on an analysis of over 5,000 individual recommendations and nearly 1,000 good practices identified in 149 completed country reviews of the first cycle. It further reflects written submissions received from 16 States parties, which availed themselves of the opportunity to provide written comments on the draft discussion paper prepared for the eighth session of Group.

2. Overall, the secretariat received positive feedback on the document, bearing in mind that the set of recommendations and conclusions are non-binding in nature. The document will be re-circulated again for written comments after this session of the Group. It will also be discussed in the Expert Meeting on International Cooperation and made available to relevant sessions of the Group. Speakers welcomed the secretariat's focused analytical work to develop non-binding conclusions and recommendations on the outcomes of the first review cycle. They noted that these would lend themselves to further discussion during the second resumed session of the Group, thereby benefiting from the contributions of relevant experts from the Expert meeting on International Cooperation.

3. Many speakers reiterated their countries' commitment to the Mechanism as a tool for the identification of gaps in the implementation of the Convention, good practices and technical assistance needs, and noted the concrete impact of the Mechanism in this regard. Speakers highlighted specific steps taken by their countries in response to the first cycle recommendations and underscored their commitment to

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address them. In particular, many speakers informed the Group about amendments to national policies, legislation and institutional reforms undertaken in order to implement the review recommendations. Speakers described, for example, the development of national strategies to prevent and counter corruption, as well as efforts to establish specialized anti-corruption courts and institutional structures to investigate and prosecute corruption offences, and to coordinate anti-corruption policies. Speakers also referred to developments in the criminalization of corruption and money-laundering, such as foreign and private sector bribery offences, trading in influence, obstruction of justice, penalties for corruption, illicit enrichment, the liability and transparency of legal persons, proceeds of crime (including measures to seize, freeze and confiscate proceeds, which had led to effective judicial orders), the protection of reporting persons, and conflicts of interest. In respect of international cooperation, speakers highlighted the development of legislation on extradition and mutual legal assistance based on the recommendations issued in the first review cycle, referred to efforts to strengthen international cooperation including through other international bodies and mechanisms, and reaffirmed the need to renew efforts to strengthen international cooperation. One speaker, while emphasizing the challenges experienced in the area of mutual legal assistance in this context, encouraged expediting the development of non-binding guidelines for proactive and timely sharing of information in accordance with article 56 of the Convention, pursuant to resolution 7/1. One speaker referred to the positive impact that the establishment of an information technology system would have on addressing the recommendations emanating from different peer review mechanisms. He encouraged the Group to consider using a similar approach when reviewing measures taken in response to review recommendations. Speakers also welcomed the support provided by UNODC and other cooperation partners in the follow-up to reviews, including through field-based staff and encouraged UNODC to further enhance this support. In this context, several speakers called on States Parties to provide UNODC with the resources necessary to extend this support also to States Parties under review in the second cycle, thus enabling them to fully benefit from the review process.

V.18-03796

United Nations CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.3

Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

Distr.: Limited
6 June 2018

Original: English

Implementation Review Group
Ninth session
Vienna, 4–6 June 2018

Draft report

Addendum

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C. Outcome of the second cycle reviews

1. In order to facilitate the Group's discussion of the outcome of the second cycle reviews of chapters II (Preventive measures) and V (Asset recovery) of the Convention, the secretariat presented an oral update on initial trends observed based on the thematic reports prepared by the secretariat (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/6 and CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/5). The secretariat informed the Group that nine executive summaries had been finalized, six of which had been completed prior to the conclusion of the thematic reports. Based on the completed executive summaries, trends were beginning to emerge in terms of challenges and good practices of implementing the two chapters of the Convention under review in the second review cycle.

2. In this regard, with respect to the implementation of Chapter II (Preventive measures) of the Convention, all States whose executive summaries had been completed at the time of drafting the thematic reports had received recommendations with respect to article 5 on preventive anti-corruption policies and practices, article 7 on the public sector and article 12 on preventive measures in the private sector. The highest number of good practices in preventing corruption had been recognized with regard to article 13 due to the importance that was given to the role played by civil society in governmental decision-making processes. States used various means to promote public participation such as referenda and direct consultations. With regard to the implementation of Chapter V (Asset recovery), the most prevalent challenges identified were related to the prevention and detection of proceeds of crime under article 52 of the Convention and to mechanisms for the recovery of property through cooperation related to confiscation under article 54 of the Convention. No good practices had been identified with regard to the implementation of article 56 of the Convention on Special Cooperation and article 58 on Financial Intelligence Units.

3. To facilitate deliberations on the implementation of Chapter V (Asset recovery) of the Convention, a panel focusing in particular on taking of measures as may be necessary to permit other States parties to initiate civil action in court to establish title to or ownership of property acquired through the commission of an offence established in accordance with the Convention was convened.

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4. The panellist from Mauritius provided an outline of the legal framework applicable to mutual legal assistance and asset recovery in Mauritius. The panellist indicated that, on the basis of the Asset Recovery Act 2011, Mauritius recognized offences committed under the law of foreign States and that, on the basis of a request containing all documentation required, Mauritius could refer a case to its Asset Recovery Investigation Division. The Division would then attempt to locate the assets and subsequently file an *ex parte* application for a restriction order. Once a restriction order had been granted and served, an application for a recovery order could be made to the Supreme Court. In cases that were initiated on the basis of a request by a foreign State or in which the enforcement of a foreign order was requested, this application would be made based on a motion or an affidavit by the Asset Recovery Unit.

5. The panellist further illustrated his explanations by providing information on case examples in which assistance for asset recovery had been provided by Mauritius. In this regard, the panellist noted some challenges that Mauritius experienced as requested State party. In particular, he underscored the importance of ensuring that all documentation required to be able to execute a request was provided on time as the absence of documentation could lead to restriction orders being lifted before a recovery order could be made. Furthermore, the panellist indicated that the requirements to serve orders and for the Supreme Court to hear all parties prior to taking a decision on granting a recovery order could pose obstacles if the parties concerned were located abroad, making assistance by foreign authorities necessary. To facilitate international cooperation, the panellist highlighted the importance of using informal means of cooperation and practitioners' networks. Furthermore, the panellist informed the Group that a dedicated team at the Attorney-General's Office had been established to deal with incoming requests for mutual legal assistance and asset recovery and expressed his hope that this development would assist in ensuring timely responses to requests for mutual legal assistance.

6. The panellist from Chile informed the Group that, while Chile did not have specific legislation addressing mutual legal assistance and asset recovery, it relied on several domestic legal tools in order to respond to requests for mutual legal assistance. By way of example, the panellist referred to the provisions of Chile's Criminal Procedure Code, indicating that it allowed for the seizure and freezing of objects and documents related to investigations. In addition, she highlighted specialized legislation on anti-money-laundering and drug trafficking that provided for the possibility of seizing and freezing assets without the need for prior notification of the alleged offender.

7. Regarding international cooperation, the panellist indicated that Chile used international agreements and general principles of international law such as reciprocity as a basis for cooperation. In this regard, the panellist reiterated the importance of using informal cooperation mechanisms, including practitioners' networks, to trace, locate and identify assets before submitting an official request for mutual legal assistance. To conclude, the panellist shared an example of a successful asset recovery case in which assets had been seized and frozen on the basis of a request for assistance. The restitution of these assets was ongoing.

8. In the ensuing discussion, speakers expressed appreciation for the analysis contained in the second cycle thematic reports and encouraged the secretariat to continue to update the thematic reports. Speakers recognized that the analysis in the reports as a useful means for assisting States in the preparation or bench-marking of reviews, and well as development of their programmes. They stressed the importance of drawing lessons from challenges identified and improving national anti-corruption systems. One speaker recommended that the outcome of the thematic reports be used to develop training materials as well as monitoring mechanisms in the area of prevention and asset recovery. Other speakers recommended that the challenges highlighted in the thematic reports such as recruitment of public officials, politically exposed persons and the absence of emergency freezing powers could be the topics for future panel discussions in the Working Groups on Prevention and Asset Recovery. Speakers also welcomed further discussions on the good practices identified as a

means of raising awareness and sharing knowledge with other States. In this regard, speakers emphasized the benefits of specialized units, particularly in terms of concentrating expertise in one place, and as a means of speeding up cases. Speakers commended the use by States parties of the Convention as a legal basis, highlighting the value of practitioner networks that can help in identifying and securing assets. One speaker pointed out the usefulness of non-mandatory measures of recovering assets such as non-conviction based forfeiture as well as of guides on asset recovery.

9. Some speakers emphasized the need for recommendations to be based on the requirements of the Convention, rather than what could be considered good practices by States. Some speakers also expressed concern at the current scheduling of meetings given the limited data available from the completed reviews as well as the limited availability of practitioners and noted that there may be value in holding fewer sessions of the Implementation Review Group per year. One speaker encouraged States to publish their full reports in order to encourage better understanding by foreign countries of their legal frameworks, including as a means of enhancing both informal and formal cooperation.

10. The Secretary noted with gratitude the appreciation expressed by States for the analytical work carried out by the secretariat and assured the Group of the continuing efforts by the secretariat to update them as more reviews were completed. He further noted that in line with the request by the Group, the analysis would be shared as widely as possible with the view to assisting States parties in undertaking reforms and learning from good practices from other States parties. With respect to the discussion on the scheduling of the meetings of the Implementation Review Group, the Secretary recalled, that the meetings' schedule was based on the multi-year work programme. He further noted that the consideration of meeting schedules of the Group had been a long-term ongoing process and that the matter should be discussed by the Conference of the States Parties. He reminded the Group of the mandate of the Implementation Review Group, not only to advance practical aspects of the implementation of the Convention, but also to advise the Conference on policy matters related to the work of the Implementation Review Mechanism. The Secretary explained the limits within which the Review Mechanism operated and emphasized that the outcomes of reviews, including the recommendations, were the result of a thorough process ensuring constructive dialogue and close adherence to the terms of reference of the Mechanism. Other underlying considerations to be taken into account when drawing up the country review reports and executive summaries, were the need for consistency, credibility, high quality and legitimacy. He encouraged States to continue to read the available reports, including the State of Implementation report, which contained in-depth information on the measures taken by States to implement chapters 3 and 4 of the Convention. Moreover, the Secretary reminded the Group that it was expected to advise the Conference on the assessment of the performance of the Mechanism, in view of the discussion that needed to take place at the end of its first phase.

United Nations CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.4

Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

Distr.: Limited
6 June 2018

Original: English

Implementation Review Group
Ninth session
Vienna, 4–6 June 2018

Draft report

Addendum

IV. Performance of the mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

A. Progress report

1. The Secretary of the Conference provided an update on the progress made in the country reviews of the first and second review cycles. With regard to the first review cycle, he highlighted that, at the time of reporting, 177 States parties under review had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist, 169 direct dialogues (157 country visits and 12 joint meetings) had taken place, and 163 executive summaries had been finalized. A further four executive summaries were in advanced stages of finalization.

2. Regarding the second review cycle, the Secretary informed the Group that all the 77 States parties under review in the first and second years of the second cycle, had nominated their focal points. Furthermore, 52 States had submitted responses to the self-assessment checklist, and 28 direct dialogues (27 country visits and one joint meeting) had taken place, while several other country visits were at various stages of planning. At the time of reporting, nine executive summaries had been finalized and six additional executive summaries were being completed. Owing to the organization of training events at early stages of the review cycle, the majority of States parties under review in the second and third years of the second cycle had nominated their focal points well before the start of their reviews, and States parties had the opportunity to engage in early preparation of their self-assessment checklists.

3. The Secretary then presented to the Group an outline of the analytical work undertaken, which was reflected in a note entitled Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/2). It was explained that the analysis had been conducted in a bid to better assess the performance of the Mechanism. While it had been noted that year 1 of the second review cycle had progressed relatively well, with four States yet to submit their self-assessment checklists, the secretariat highlighted with great concern considerable delays in year 2.

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4. In acknowledging that the submission of the self-assessment checklist was the real starting point in any implementation review, the secretariat pointed to the late submissions of checklists as being at the root of the overall delays in the reviews of year 2. At the time of the meeting, only 27 of 48 checklists had been received by the secretariat. It was explained that, due to the spillover from years 1 and 2, year 3 of the second cycle would start with an additional 25 reviews. While States had not been unresponsive, such delays could negatively impact the functioning of the mechanism. The Chair urged States parties to redouble all efforts to prevent any further delays that could put the good performance of the Mechanism at risk.

5. Several speakers noted that lessons learned from the first cycle had served as a reminder of the complexity in securing wide stakeholder involvement and the importance of starting preparations for the self-assessment checklist early. A number of speakers described their efforts to complete the checklist well in advance of the scheduled start of their country reviews. In this regard, several speakers noted how the inter-institutional coordination groups created for the first cycle had been revived or continued to serve in that role also during the second cycle. One speaker referred to national efforts to issue guidelines for national stakeholders in order to outline their roles in the country review. A number of speakers underscored that in federal states, the requirement to also consult at a sub-federal level, especially for the review of Chapter II (Preventive measures), had led to delays in completing the checklists.

6. Several speakers expressed their countries' appreciation to the secretariat for providing support to States in their preparations for the second and third years of their second cycle reviews, by organizing training workshops for focal points and governmental experts. Many speakers underlined the importance of the workshops in preparing focal points and experts for completing their checklists and for the experts of reviewing States. One speaker noted that the training had also promoted a culture of integrity.

7. Many speakers highlighted the importance of the Convention as the only comprehensive platform for the fight against corruption. At its 15th anniversary, the Convention continued to remain the only holistic international anti-corruption instrument. One speaker noted that the establishment of the African peer review would be aligned with the Convention's review mechanism. One speaker noted that a review group had been set up in 2015 by States in the Arab region to monitor anti-corruption developments in the region. Several speakers underlined the need for clear political will to fully implement the Convention.

8. Speakers underscored their continued commitment to the Convention and reaffirmed their support for the review mechanism, which had identified good practices, as well as helped crystallize weaknesses and gaps in their national administrative and legal regimes. Many speakers reported on wide-ranging reforms in their domestic anti-corruption frameworks, including plans and strategies and other mechanisms to prevent, investigate, and deter corruption both as a consequence of their first cycle reviews as well as in preparation for the second cycle. The implementation of the Convention as a means to ensure progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in general, and the implementation of Goal 16 in particular was underscored by many speakers.

9. On asset recovery and prevention, several States stressed that the Convention requirements had triggered legislative amendments or new laws. In speaking of measures that overlapped both cycles, the strengthening of confiscation regimes and enhancing international cooperation, including mutual legal assistance, was noted by many delegates in particular in relation to asset recovery. Many delegates also spoke of the establishment of systems to facilitate the reporting by public officials of acts of corruption and the protection of such persons.

10. The establishment and publication of beneficial ownership registers were measures commonly noted, as was the setting up of specialized asset recovery units. A number of speakers mentioned establishing the requirement for public officials to declare or disclose their assets. The use of information technology for asset

declarations, as well as conflict of interest disclosures was noted by several speakers. Many States underlined the central role of the Convention for the exchange of information and best practices to enable more concerted work to combat corruption.

11. On the matter of access to information and transparency in public administration, several States reported that they had joined the Open Government Initiative and other transparency initiatives. States also spoke of the inclusion of external stakeholders such as civil society, academia, media and the private sector in work related to awareness-raising, as well as their involvement in the implementation reviews. Other areas of cooperation extended to the formulation of national anti-corruption strategies, as well as anti-corruption curriculum development for use in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Cooperation efforts with the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) were noted by several speakers.

B. Implementation of resolution 7/4 of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption: Enhancing synergies between relevant multilateral organizations responsible for review mechanisms in the field of anti-corruption

12. A representative of the secretariat briefed the Group on the activities carried out in furtherance of Conference resolution 7/4 and referred to the full report on that topic (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/CRP.1). He noted that, pursuant to operative paragraph 1 of resolution 7/4, the Secretariat had been requested to "continue its dialogue with States parties and with the secretariats of other relevant multilateral mechanisms in the field of anti-corruption". He further informed the Group that this dialogue was ongoing and that it had taken many forms, including the organization of joint side events at the seventh session of the Conference of the States Parties in Vienna in 2017 and regular attendance at each other's meetings. In particular, UNODC and partner secretariats had organized a special event entitled "Enhancing the cooperation between the secretariats of international anti-corruption peer review mechanisms" in the margins of the Conference. In order to further improve the dialogue with partner secretariats, UNODC had also continued its practice of attending more regularly the meetings of the OECD Working Group on Bribery and the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). Furthermore, the speaker noted that the secretariat of the Council of Europe's GRECO had prepared a proposal on "Enhancing Synergies Amongst the International Anti-Corruption Monitoring Bodies" which was to be considered by the GRECO plenary, which was shared with the Group in document CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/CRP.8.

13. Several speakers expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the secretariat to enhance synergies with other review mechanisms in the field of anti-corruption. One speaker highlighted that her country had established a focal point for all peer review mechanisms at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and developed a methodology to refer to answers already prepared for other mechanisms in order to save time. Referring to the GRECO proposal, she also suggested that UNODC, GRECO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) develop a joint proposal for enhancing synergies. Another speaker pointed out that his country had established a workplan to better follow up on the implementation of recommendations issued by the various review mechanisms that his country was involved in. He also referred to the recent Lima Commitment on "Democratic Governance against Corruption" adopted by the eighth Summit of the Americas, which had called upon the Mechanism for Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC) to coordinate with other international and regional anti-corruption bodies so as to foster synergies and to avoid duplication of efforts in the fight against corruption.

14. Some speakers expressed concern that there may be limits to enhancing synergies between various review mechanisms, notably due to different mandates, terms of reference and confidentiality requirements, and cautioned that closer

cooperation should not lead to the creation of a new layer of bureaucracy. A number of speakers noted that some of the proposed measures may have cost implications. Furthermore, one speaker referred to the good practice of scheduling meetings by relevant forums in consecutive weeks in order to facilitate the travel of participants and enhance the representation of delegations at meetings.

15. One speaker referred to the regional addenda to the thematic reports that had been prepared by the secretariat during the first cycle of reviews and suggested that it would be useful to cooperate with regional organizations in the drafting of regional implementation reports. He also invited regional organizations to become more active in the discussions relating to the Convention. The possible establishment of joint information sharing platforms and tools was mentioned by some speakers.

16. The representative of the Council of Europe noted that GRECO's proposal was still a work in progress and stressed that greater cooperation should not become a strain on the budget. A representative of OECD highlighted that the discussion on that topic, was also on the agenda of the OECD Working Group on Bribery which would take place the following week.